DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 088 896 SP 007 872

TITLE	An Overview of Alternative Education: Implications for a Teacher Center Model.
INSTITUTION	Minneapolis Public Schools, Minn.; Minnesota Univ., Minneapolis.
PUB DATE	Feb 74
NOTE	6p.
EDRS PRICE	MF-$0.75 HC-$1.50
DESCRIPTORS	*Educational Innovation; Experimental Programs; Experimental Schools; Federal Programs; *Teacher Centers; *Teacher Education
IDENTIFIERS	*Experimental Schools Program; Minneapolis Public Schools; University of Minnesota

ABSTRACT

The Minneapolis Public Schools' Experimental School Project, Southeast Alternatives (SEA), consists of four alternative elementary programs and two secondary level programs. The elementary level programs are a) the Contemporary School which incorporates promising practices into an essentially teacher-directed structure; b) the Continuous Progress Primary which allows each child to progress at his own pace; c) the Open School which offers flexible curriculum, scheduling, and age grouping, with emphasis on helping children learn to think and make independent judgments; and d) the Free School which places emphasis on making the curriculum relevant to present-day issues. At the secondary level the two alternatives are a) the Free School program described above and b) the Marshall University High School where a student designs his own educational program with the consent of his parents. A teacher center has been established cooperatively by Minneapolis Public Schools and the University of Minnesota to provide in-service and preservice training to teachers which is relevant to the Experimental Schools Project and the rest of the Minneapolis School System. The Teacher Center has three governing bodies: the Administrative Committee which advises the director and the board; the Teacher Center Board which has broad program and policy responsibility; and the Inservice Committee which aids in the identification of teacher training needs, both pre- and in-service. (HMD)

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY

BEST COPY AVAILABLE 501.

AN OVERVIEW OF ALTERNATIVE EDUCATION:

IMPLICATIONS FOR A TEACHER CENTER MODEL

February 1974

MPS/UM TEACHER CENTER
155 Folk Hall
University of Minnesota
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55455

ED 088896

MPS/UM Teacher Center

The present Teacher Center model is, among other roles, a "linking system" for the University and the Minneapolis Public Schools. It focuses on three services:

1. Development of better undergraduate/graduate (pre-service) student teacher training programs. The SEA area is controlled by the Teacher Center for the purposes of clinical placements. In this service role, the Center develops and coordinates student placements for a number of colleges and universities in addition to the University of Minnesota. A full time coordinator on 0.5 University of Minnesota appointment, and 0.5 Minneapolis appointment serves a combined Teacher Center role.

2. Development of a system for identifying staff training (in-service needs and responding to those needs. This process emphasises decentralized decision-making--control by the consumers. The process recognizes the differential staff needs at various K-12 levels and the differential needs dictated by evolution of alternative programs and organizations. Most of all, it accepts the need for all educational personnel to have a significant role in shaping their own professional development. The control of these services, including budget and programs, rests with a thirteen member committee elected and representative of the SEA area. Membership includes: 7 faculty, 1 administrator, 3 parents, 2 U of M faculty. The chairman is a full time teacher Center staff member, a teacher on one-year assignment who serves as coordinator of the programs and budgets for the committee.

3. Development of a service center, a professional laboratory, which will serve staff in an informal, ad hoc fashion; and function also as a planning

center, a meeting place and other services as they are identified. The development of this service is primarily an administrative and staff function. Training programs and other activities supported by the Center are often carried out within the schools and elsewhere.

The MPS/UM Teacher Center - Organization Plan

The Teacher Center has three governance bodies in addition to the Director and the staff.

The Administrative Committee consists of:

Deputy Superintendent - Dr. Harry Vakos

Assistant Superintendent - Marshal Kaner

Associate Dean - Dr. William Gardner

Associate Dean - Dr. Darrell Lewis

This committee is the reporting line for the Director. It functions as an advisory body to the Teacher Center Board and the Director, and is empowered with final review of all major policy and program decisions. Programs under their review include those funded by the joint resources of the University and the Minneapolis Public Schools (1973-74, $100,000). They do not review SEA in-service program expenditures in advance.

The Teacher Center Board is an eight member body appointed by the Dean of the College of Education and the Superintendent of Schools. They are:

Dr. Howard Williams - Secondary Department Chairman

Dr. Robert Dykstra - Elementary Department Chairman (acting)

Dr. Frank Wood - Special Education Department Chairman

Dr. Jerry Brunetti - Secondary Faculty

Ken Rustad - SEA Pupil Personnel Coordinator

James Seeden - Secondary Teacher

Mary Lou Hartley - Elementary Teacher

Jane Starr - SEA parent

This Board has broad policy and program responsibility for the Teacher Center. They select the Director, who is on annual appointment, and with the Director serving as chairman of the Board, establish goals and objectives for the Center. They occassionally form into sub-committees for developing operational procedures in cooperating with the Director and staff.

The In-Service Committee is described in an earlier section dealing with program services (item #2, page 1).

The Director serves as a staff member fo the Director of SEA, via membership on the SEA Management Team. The Director coordinates the various service functions of the Center, pre-service, in-service, space management, program development, program monitoring, needs assessments, etc. Most of these functional roles are delegated to staff (and their related governance bodies) along with budget controls. All of these services are integrated into the SEA schools' programs in a variety of ways, particularly through long range planning processes.

The Teacher Center's programs may not intrude on the authority of the principal. Any program involving school staff activity which takes them from their regular school roles, must have prior approval by the principal before it receives any Teacher Center action. This restriction does not apply when staff are on their own time or when in-service activity is carried on concurrently with their other functions.

BACKGROUND INFORMATION ON SOUTHEAST ALTERNATIVES

December, 1973

The Experimental Schools Program (ESP), a plan testing comprehensive change in education, was initiated in 1971 with the intent to bridge the gap from research and experimentation to practice.

The experimental schools concept became a reality when Congress appropriated $12 million for the fiscal year 1971 following President Nixon's message on education reform, March 30, 1970. The program was first sponsored by the United States Office of Education and now is directed by the National Institute of Education (NIE).

The Minneapolis Public School District was one of eight school districts throughout the nation that received $10,000 planning grants to prepare a proposal for a single comprehensive K-12 project. In May, 1971 three of the eight districts, Minneapolis Public Schools, Berkeley Unified School District of Berkeley, California and Franklin Pierce School District of Tacoma, Washington, were selected as experimental school sites. There are 18 experimental school sites as of 1973.

Southeast Alternatives, the name given to the Minneapolis Public Schools' Experimental School Project, was funded for five years. On June 1, 1971, a 27-month operation grant of $3,580,877 was made to the school district. A final 33-month contract for $3,036,722 was approved by the National Institute of Education (NIE) on May 22, 1973.

Major factors in the selection of southeast Minneapolis as the site for the Minneapolis program were its commitment to a comprehensive proposal, past record of responsible innovation, and plan for providing parent choice of alternative schools. The 2,200 K-12 students in the project include a racially and economically diverse urban population. Southeast Minneapolis,

bounded by factories, flour mills, freeways, multiple dwellings, residential neighborhoods, shopping areas and railroads, also houses the main campus of the University of Minnesota, Minneapolis. Stately old homes, low income apartments and expensive condominiums are all located in the area. This mixture of ages, occupations, interests, and life styles supports a diversity of views about the nature of public education which the five SEA alternative schools of parent choice reflect.

The central theme of Southeast Alternatives is to provide comprehensive change in the educational structure and programs for the better education of children. The change is accomplished by offering choices to students, teachers, and parents in the types of educational programs available, involving students, faculty and parents in educational decision-making processes and decentralizing the administrative structure of the school district to local schools.

At the elementary level four major alternative school programs are offered:

The Contemporary School at Tuttle incorporates promising practices without deviating greatly from the present teacher-directed, structured curriculum and grade level organization.

The Continuous Progress primary at Pratt and the Continuous Progress intermediate at Motley allow each child to advance at his own pace without regard to grade level. Mornings are highly structured with language arts, math and social studies. Afternoons are used for two week interest groups designed and implemented by students, faculty and staff, parents and volunteers.

The Open School at Marcy offers flexible curriculum, scheduling and age grouping, with emphasis on helping children to learn to think, and to learn to make independent judgments.

BEST COPY AVAILABLE

The Free School (K-12) has curriculum flexibility allowing the student to pursue areas he or she wishes to develop and experience with emphasis on making the curriculum relevant to present day issues.

At the secondary level the Free School program option is available as well as the flexible Marshall-University High School array of courses and activities. At Marshall-University High School each student with his parents' consent designs his or her educational program within a trimester system of twelve week courses. In addition to single discipline courses there are multi-disciplinary courses, independent study opportunities, and a variety of off-campus learning programs in the community.

The transitional program for grades 7-8 at Marshall-University High School has been revised to offer choices to students coming from the elementary options. An ungraded Open Classroom and graded classes are available as well as A.L.E., the Adjusted Learning Environment for students with special needs. Teachers work in teams to offer a flexible program to meet the needs of students in the transitional years.

A Teacher Center has been established to provide teachers with an opportunity to receive substantial inservice training as well as to provide an avenue for preservice experiences. An Inservice Committee made up of teachers from the schools receives proposals and acts on them, thus providing a direct role for teachers in the staff development activities. The University of Minnesota and Minneapoli, Public Schools jointly operate the Teacher Center which was first initiated with federal SEA funds.

Evaluation of the SEA project is both internal and external. The Level I internal evaluation team provides day-to-day responsive formative evaluation to program decision-makers including parents, administrators, faculty, staff and students.